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ABSTRACT

The current age has been characterized as an Age of Materialism in which personal goals are material aims and pleasures. The need for getting back to a spiritual culture is considered foundational. It is the duty of educators to provide for the spiritual or affective domain of a learner's development. To neglect this aspect of a person's being is to miss fostering completeness in a learner and in the curriculum. The following characteristics could be competency-based objectives for a spiritual curriculum: a sense of humor, flexibility, joyousness, resourcefulness, responsiveness, patience, and resilience. This paper concludes with a list of 30 ways to explore spirituality and enhance the affective domain. (DC)

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SPIRITUALITY: AN AFFECTIVE FACET FOR CURRICULUM CONSIDERATION

Dr. Leonore W. Dickmann

The age in which we live has been characterized by some writers as an Age of Materialism. It is stated that people today are engaged in a pursuit of material aims and material pleasures. The accumulation of things and objects is pointed out as the prime motivator.

Other writers expand upon this theme and call for a return to basic values. A need for considering "roots" is receiving currency. Some analysts of the human scene see this return to roots as a returning to our dominant potential - our very spirit or inner self - rather than continuing the preoccupation with the material side of worldly concerns. The need is delineated as getting back to a spiritual culture as foundational.

Writing in The Farther Reaches of Human Nature Maslow stated, "Man is a hierarchy of needs with the biological needs at the base of the hierarchy and the spiritual needs at the top." Educators, who are concerned with meeting the needs of learners have a mandate to provide for this need, also, within the curriculum if their goal is to help a student attain completeness as an individual.

It was Jacques Maritain who said, "The primary aim of education in the broadest sense of the word is ... to help a child of man to attain his full formation or his completeness as a man." To meet our primary aim, then, curriculum planners need to include provision for the affective domain of a learner's development. Feelings, emotions, and values of students fall within spiritual actualization of individuals.

In considering spirituality as a facet for curriculum development, it is not to be confused nor equated with religiosity. Religious concerns are not the focus and need not enter a curriculum plan highlighting spirituality.

Spirituality, rather, is suggested as a facet of an individual's being possessing identifying attributes. Attributes such as resilient, responsive, joyous would fall into this category. Additional qualities could be patient, humoristic, hopeful, happy, and flexible. Characteristics dealing with the affective aspect of consciousness, the emotions, and feelings, are qualities of spirituality.

It is this dimension of an individual's being that is skirted, omitted, or even avoided in instruction. To neglect this vital aspect of a person's being, is to miss fostering completeness in a learner and in the curriculum.

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With today's emphasis on competency-based education, objectives for dealing with spirituality as a facet in curriculum planning could be:

- The individual displays a sense of humor.
- The individual is flexible.
- The individual is joyous and willing to share joy with others.
- The individual is resourceful - deals promptly and effectively with problems.
- The individual is responsive to others.
- The individual is patient with others.
- The individual is resilient - able to bounce or to take another path when needed.

It is time to enhance the completeness of curricular offerings as well as the completeness of learners by considering spirituality as a viable framework in curriculum development. To neglect doing this is to negate the affective domain and to dismiss a crucial aspect of self making for learners.

30 WAYS TO EXPLORE SPIRITUALITY AS A FACET OF BEING

- laugh at a joke
- exchange a smile
- talk with others
- write a friendly letter to someone
- stress the positive point of view in outlook and interaction
- get involved in a creative project
- explore a relationship between two things
- wonder what is in a drawer, box, or envelope before looking
- change some disorder into order
- study a work of art
- listen to a musical composition
- be open to inspiration
- appreciate someone's contribution
- give a compliment
- read an article or book for self-renewal
- take an observation walk
- telephone a friend
- have lunch with someone you enjoy
- brainstorm a list of "what if..." questions
- think about reasons to celebrate
- celebrate an event - big or small
- write a poem (haiku, cinquain, diamante, etc.)
- reflect or meditate - calling on inner strengths
- focus on people not objects
- engage in a self-improvement campaign

- break any preoccupation with the material side of the world problems and accept the importance of the human side of the issues:

    - cultural identity
    - emancipation of woman et al
    - status of children
    - environment
    - food
    - energy
    - population
    - needs, rights, and responsibilities of human beings

- shift to questions of

    - hope or despair
    - justice or injustice
    - well-being or destitution
    - percpetions or misperceptions of people

- keep the broader vision of the quality of humanness at the forefront of thinking

- participate in decision-making:

    - cooperation
    - dialogue
    - empathy
    - openness

- do a good deed